



NEWS RELEASE

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DHS INTERNAL INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN ARREST OF FORMER EMPLOYEE

A Department of Human Services caseworker was indicted last week after DHS investigators presented evidence to a Shelby County grand jury.

Barbara Howard of Memphis was indicted on two counts of Class D felony theft. She is accused of setting up a dummy case and then taking more than \$33,000 in cash and food stamp benefits for her own personal use.

An investigation was initiated by DHS earlier this year when DHS officials noted irregularities occurring within a case managed by Howard. Based on the results of that investigation, Howard was terminated and evidence was presented to the grand jury on Nov. 5.

Howard was taken into custody on Nov. 7 and later released on bond.

"The internal program controls that the department has in place told us something was wrong in this case, and our investigation confirmed those suspicions," said Ed Lake, Assistant Commissioner for Adult and Family Services. "We are especially disturbed that this involved an employee, but we take these charges very seriously and are committed to curbing fraud and theft of benefits, no matter who is involved."

Lake added that anyone who suspects or knows about fraud or theft of benefits is urged to call the toll-free DHS Fraud Hotline at 1-800-241-2629.